

**USE FOR SHARKS.**

**Murderous Sea Monster Makes Excellent Leather.**

"Modern science is helping to convert another of man's traditional enemies, the shark, into his serviceable friend," according to a bulletin from the Washington, D. C., headquarters of the National Geographic society.

"Already sharks are contributing food, gelatine, and oil for many purposes, to appease the ever more complex needs of mankind, and now they are being experimented with as a probably source of shoe leather.

"Not many years ago the cattle on the western plains and on the farms averaged about one animal to each person in the United States, but today there is not much more than half a beef animal for each inhabitant of the country, and the import of hides is negligible.

"The U. S. Bureau of Standards has completed arrangements to test the comparative durability of paper leather made from sharkskin as compared with that of calfskin and cowhide. The cooperation of the shoe manufacturers has been obtained in the making of the necessary shoe for the tests.

"Sharks are regarded as the most rapacious, bloodthirsty and cruel of all the inhabitants of the sea, all of the known species, with four exceptions, being flesh-eating. They are long and cylindrical, the body terminating in a sharp snout in front and a long and flattened tail behind. The mouth is placed crosswise and usually is on the lower surface of the head, some distance behind the tip of the snout. Almost all sharks are marine, though many occasionally follow their prey into mouths of rivers. Their teeth are arranged in formidable triangular tiers, the first or outer row alone being used while the rest are turned back out of the way. When those of the first row are lost, those of the next row take their place.

"The fins, with their abundant cartilage, form the basis of the supply of gelatine in China.

"The livers are taken for the oil they contain. They are placed in water and cooked either by steam or fire, and then the oil is skimmed off, in former times they were 'sun-dried'—placed in water and allowed to stand in the sun for several days. The quality produced by this method (which is still pursued in Labrador and Newfoundland) is much better than that obtained by the more modern methods, but the difference in quantity is considerable. Quantity and quality vary considerably with the season. The oil is of value in dressing leather, soap making, fish glue, paints, and for medicinal purposes. The yield varies from less than a pint of the smaller sharks, to about 125 gallons in the larger sizes.

"At one time large quantities of the hides, cleaned but not tanned, were used for polishing wood, ivory, and metal. With improvements in methods of preparation of sandpaper and emery, these have largely replaced animal hides. Small quantities of certain classes of skin are still in demand among cabinet makers, and have other special uses, as in the manufacture of optical fittings. Peculiar markings, such as transverse bands or elongated spots, and the character of the small, close set, variously sculptured lime-like particles which cover the skin, have adapted some to uses for sword grips, card cases, jewelry boxes and other novelties. The demand for sword grips is at present usually large and difficult to supply with satisfactory material.

"Within the last year American tanners have experimented in the production of leathers from these hides excellent results, and there now exists a demand for large quantities of raw materials. In tensile strength, leathers tested compare favorably with those made from animal hides, and the market for those products appears assured. Special seines, 600 feet long and 18 feet deep, with a four-inch mesh of extra heavy-twine, are constructed to capture these fish. One crew, fishing off the southern coast, has captured 200 sharks in a day. A hide will produce from 10 to 40 square feet of leather suitable for shoes. Five hundred skins a week are said to be handled at one tannery, the output of which is to be greatly increased during the next year.

"The meat of the shark is white and edible, resembling halibut. It is canned, and dried for shipment to the markets."

**The Widow's Kiss.**

A lady friend of The Herald, an attractive young widow, handed in the following for publication:

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